



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**Project Address:** 3841 E Washington Avenue  
**Application Type:** Alteration to an existing development in Urban Design District (UDD) No. 5  
Final Approval is Requested  
**Legistar File ID #:** [71120](#)  
**Prepared By:** Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

## Background Information

**Applicant | Contact:** Morgan Van Riper-Rose, Repvblik Madison, LLC | Shaun Elwood, Schwerdt Design Group

**Project Description:** The applicant is seeking Final Approval for conversion of the vacant former Madison Plaza Hotel into multi-family apartments. The existing 197 hotel rooms will be converted into 180 studios and 10 one-bedroom apartments, each with a full kitchen, fully upgraded finishes and a modern paint scheme. Corridors, common areas and amenity spaces will also receive new flooring, paint, and furnishings. Exterior upgrades include patching and repairing the existing exterior EIFS and gable roofs with a new color scheme, additional sidewalk connectivity and additional landscaping. Once completed, on-site resident amenities include a fitness center, co-working spaces, lounges, communal laundry facility, storage and a landscaped courtyard.

**Plan Commission Action:** The Plan Commission approved this project at their October 3, 2022, meeting. As part of their approval, a condition was added with regard to the pedestrian pathway as noted in the UDC recommendation:

*“Provide an enhanced pedestrian connection to the East Washington Avenue sidewalk for approval by Planning Division and Traffic Engineering Division staff. Modifications are intended to approve the convenience and safety of this connection; possible improvements to the pedestrian connection include relocation, grade separation, bollard installation, or other design enhancements.”*

As proposed, Planning and Traffic Engineering staff believe that the condition is met.

**Approval Standards:** The UDC is an **approving body** as the site is within Urban Design District 5 (“UDD 5”), which requires that the Urban Design Commission review the proposed project using the design requirements and guidelines of [Section 33.24\(12\)](#).

**Adopted Plans:** The project site is also located within the [Greater East Towne Area Plan](#) (the “Plan”). The Plan recommends Community Mixed Use (“CMU”) development on the project site, which includes residential development. The Plan aims to create complete neighborhoods, which are identified as having safe and convenient access to services, a range of housing costs and types, a well-connected streets and pathways, and open spaces. Also noted in the Plan, there is a priority planned public roadway connection that connects Lien Road to Mendota Street that would run through the project site directly in front of the existing hotel building.

## Summary of Design Considerations

Staff requests that the UDC review the proposed development and make findings based on the UDD 5 guidelines and requirements, including the conditions that were part of the Commission’s Initial Approval motion as noted below:

- Providing a landscape plan, including plantings in the courtyard space and the use of bark mulch.

With regard to the landscape plan, as noted in the UDD 5 landscaping requirements and guidelines, consideration should be given to providing functional and decorative landscape that provides year-round color and texture, as well as proper edging and mulch.

- Updating the photometric plan to address the concerns noted in the staff report, including those related to providing lighting in the courtyard and along pedestrian pathways.

With regard to lighting, the photometric plan appears to have inconsistencies with the City's Outdoor Lighting requirements (Section 26.36, MGO) for low level activity areas, including light levels in excess of 5.0 footcandles in pedestrian areas. As noted in UDD 5 guidelines and requirements, *"...lighting shall be adequate, but not excessive."*

As a potential code compliance issue, the applicant is advised that an updated photometric plan and fixture cutsheets, consistent with MGO Section 29.36, will be required to be submitted for review and approval prior to permitting.

- Updating the elevations to address architectural comments, including:
  - Updating the color of the downspouts and gutters to match the exterior wall color,
  - Consideration should be given to downplaying the arches in the building gable ends,
  - Updating the color of the wall packs to be a lighter color to match the window frame,
  - Consideration should be given to utilizing the same window type throughout, i.e. update sliding windows to match the new windows above the front entry.

The UDC should make findings based on the UDD 5 requirements and guidelines for each of the design considerations noted above. Per the Commission's adopted Policy and Procedures Manual, Initial Approval signals approval for general site plan layout and building massing, noting that architectural or material revisions are still found necessary prior to final approval. In this case, the motion for Initial Approval specified that the three considerations noted above needed to be addressed in order to reach Final Approval. Staff advises that the Commission base this review on those previously-specified elements.

## Summary of UDC Initial Approval

As a reference, the Commission's comments and action from the September 7, 2022, Initial Approval are provided below:

- The landscape plan, the street connection to E. Washington Avenue, bike parking and site lighting are all issues pointed out in the staff memo.
- It does not appear that the landscape plan is complete, it lacks detailed information.
- We addressed the lack of landscaping in the courtyard at the Informational Presentation. The bulk of their supporting text makes references to doing stuff in these areas, but there's absolutely no details presented.
- Is it worth our time to discuss a landscape plan that was not submitted?
- I would echo that. I saw mostly trees in the perimeter landscaping, but there wasn't really a lot of detail, otherwise as far as foundation plantings, what's happening in the courtyard, etc.
- I would echo the staff report and maybe more importantly, the red line striping for pedestrian connectivity; having that through the parking lot is not great. It should be a permanent sidewalk

connection, protected from traffic, a true pedestrian connection and not just a striping intervention. The bike parking also needs rethinking.

- Overall I like the idea behind the project, but there are a handful of things we would need to see for final approval.
  - Our current approach to the landscape plan was since we are not exceeding the 10% site disturbance, a landscape plan would not be required for final approval. We have had discussions on our commitment to the courtyard, the design is still ongoing and we would have something to distribute at some point.
  - The final point at the corner of the building was selected to minimize bicycle traffic through the lobby, with access to indoor bicycle parking in that area. With the reduction of the overall canopy, the overall site plan maintains the minimum driveway spacing from where the pedestrian access is proposed, and we do have striping from the corner of the building to the public right-of-way along E. Washington Avenue. The two separate parcels (Lots 1 and 2) will be developed at some point, we are evaluating that and will ensure that they all work together for pedestrian and vehicular traffic, but for this particular application, access was strictly just for Lot 3.
- (Secretary) The UDD 5 landscape requirements are in effect for this development. The Zoning Code requirements are not in effect due to the level of site change. The UDD guidelines are supposed to be met as closely as possible. If the Commission can find the requirements are met based on what we see this evening, then things can move forward with the plans we have. If not, then we'll need additional information to be able to say that those requirements have been met.
- They are completely changing the use, people are going to live here.
- We should comment on the general placement of light fixtures and the fixtures themselves.
- (Secretary) Lighting will have to meet the current code, regardless of use of the building.
- No lighting is shown in the courtyard, it would benefit from nighttime lighting.
- My interpretation is yes, we can see some landscape improvements happening, but for all we know these areas could be a bunch of Stella D'Oro daylilies in stone mulch. Without knowing what any of that plant material is, it's hard to judge whether it's adequately contributing to urban design.
- Specifically on the crosswalk, could you take that route and shift it up along the edge of the parking and have a multi-use trail for pedestrians and bikes that connects you to E. Washington and gets you out of the traffic lane altogether?
  - It would appear we are falling short of your expectations on landscaping and aesthetics here. We thought we were in conformance, I hope you would agree we are providing a much needed improvement to this property. We will take this input to heart. We need to emphasize that we have some conditions that require us to commence this project in short order. If we're not in a position to receive final approval it would be harmful to us.
- The exterior design treatment to the EIFS and brick that's there is pretty successful. Taking off the hotel porte cochere makes it look less like a hotel.
- (Secretary) The UDC is approving for the request on the UDD 5 items, and advisory to the Plan Commission on the conditional use request, specifically related to pedestrian connectivity and any improvements to the parking lot related to conditional use standards 5 & 9.
- I agree that rethinking the color palette and banding is a success. I would suggest the color of the gutters should match the wall. Curious about the windows with the small panes, are those sliding, and if so, I would ask the Commission if they think that matches the larger windows above the new entry. Possibilities are limited because it's an existing building, but the small scale of the sliding windows with larger above seems unbalanced, and could just go back to sliding windows there.
- I appreciate the flat canopy over the entry and over the windows, they have a modern look, but you have gables with 1980s curvature in the stucco. The flat canopies seem updated and modern to me, wonder if you might consider downplaying those arcs on the gable ends of the dormers.

- The wall packs being so dark, particularly in the courtyard, will be quite a visible feature, repeated over and over, I suggest you paint those lighter colors.
- Either the color ought to match the window framing or be lighter, how wall packs are handled is important and I'm not clear given these drawings.
- I saw a note about stone mulch, which we try to avoid. When you fine tune your landscape plan our preference would be a bark mulch that supports plant life.

The motion provided for the following:

- The applicant shall provide a landscape plan as part of the Final Approval application, including plantings in the courtyard space and the use of bark mulch.
- The applicant shall update the photometric plan that responds to the concerns in the staff report, including lighting in the courtyard and along pedestrian pathways.
- The applicant shall update the elevations to address architectural comments, including:
  - Updating the color of the downspouts and gutters to match the exterior wall color,
  - Consideration should be given to downplaying the arches in the building gable ends,
  - Updating the color of the wall packs to be a lighter color to match the window frame,
  - Consideration should be given to utilizing the same window type throughout, i.e. update sliding windows to match the new windows above the front entry.
- The advisory motion reflects that conditional use standard #9 has been fulfilled; standard #5 requires additional enhancement or rework, including consideration being given to the location and treatment of the pedestrian crosswalk connection and consider a true connection that is raised and protected.